

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 14400
San Francisco, CA 94102

Contact: Victoria B. Henley
Director-Chief Counsel
(415) 557-1200

FOR RELEASE
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JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION ISSUES
PUBLIC ADMONISHMENT OF JUDGE TARA M. FLANAGAN

The Commission on Judicial Performance has publicly admonished Judge Tara M. Flanagan of the Alameda County Superior Court. The commission determined that Judge Flanagan should be publicly admonished for misconduct relating to the judge's 2012 campaign for judicial office. Judge Flanagan violated the Political Reform Act (Act) by not disclosing her treasurer as the true source of two loans to her campaign in campaign statements, by depositing the checks from her treasurer into her business and personal accounts, thereby commingling campaign and personal funds, by using a cashier's check for one of the loans in violation of law and by failing to inform her treasurer of the campaign treasurer's responsibility for filing campaign reports for making contributions of \$5,000 or more. The combined loans totaled \$25,000 and comprised 23 percent of the receipts for then candidate Flanagan's 2012 campaign committee. Judge Flanagan entered into a stipulation with the California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), which included payment of a penalty in the amount of \$4,500, for the failure to disclose her treasurer as the true source of the \$25,000 in loans.

The commission determined that Judge Flanagan's violations of law constituted improper political activity in violation of canon 5 of the Code of Judicial Ethics, applicable to candidates for judicial office, and conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute. The commission took into account that the FPPC found the violations to be unintentional. Regardless of the judge's motivations, however, the commission determined that, particularly as an attorney, she should have familiarized herself with the applicable reporting requirements before submitting an official statement and that ignorance of the law is an aggravating factor for a judicial candidate. The commission did take into consideration that Judge Flanagan cooperated with the FPPC and the commission, and that she has expressed regret for her errors and fully acknowledged that she had the responsibility to know the law and comply with it, but failed to do so.

The public admonishment is available on the commission's website at <http://cjp.ca.gov> (under "Pending Cases - Press Releases & Documents" and "Public Discipline & Decisions") and at the commission's office. Judge Flanagan is represented by Attorney Edith R. Matthai of Los Angeles.

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The commission is composed of three judges, two lawyers and six public members. The chairperson is Honorable Ignazio J. Ruvolo of the Court of Appeal, First Appellate District.

For further information about the Commission on Judicial Performance, see the commission's website at <http://cjp.ca.gov>.